



Very Low Birth Weight Clark County and Washington State Three year periods, 1992-1994 through 1999-2001

Why we should care:

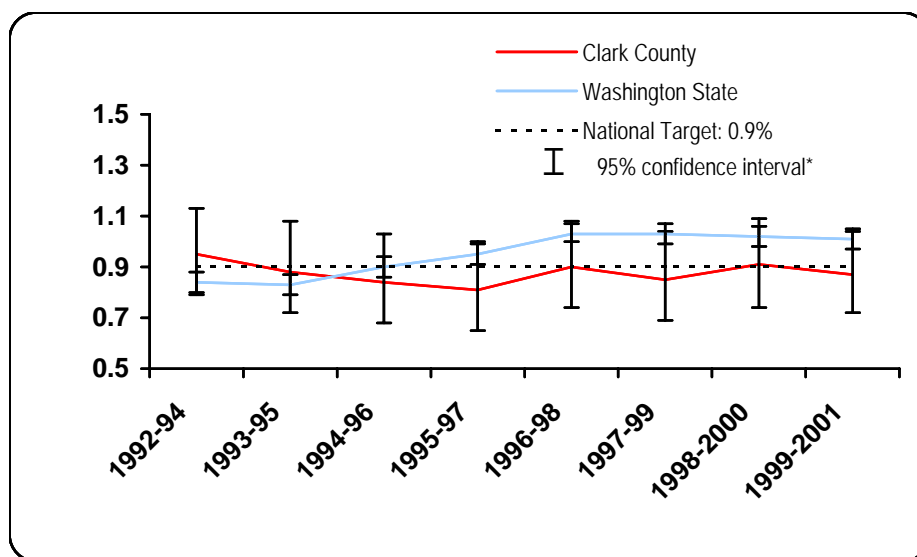
Very low birth weight (VLBW) infants are at particularly high risk of severe physical and developmental complications or death. (1) These infants are also more likely to experience long-term developmental and neurologic disabilities compared to normal birth weight infants. Each normal birth weight delivery that occurs instead of a VLBW birth saves approximately \$59,700 in the first year of care. (2)

Status:

- The percent of VLBW is slowly increasing in both Clark County and Washington State. (3,4) In Clark County, 0.9% of all births in the 1999-2001 period were VLBW. In Washington State, 1.0% of all births in the same period were VLBW. (3,4)
- Clark County meets the national target rate of no more than 0.9% of all births are VLBW. (5)

What we can do:

- VLBW is associated with preterm birth. Preventing prematurity is very difficult because approximately half of all preterm births are due to unknown causes. The greatest risk factors include having had a previous preterm delivery, carrying twins or triplets, and advanced maternal age. Other factors include infections, maternal underweight or obesity, use of tobacco, drugs, and/or alcohol, and maternal and fetal stress, especially that occur early in pregnancy. (6)
- Primary prevention strategies involve comprehensive, client-centered risk reduction approaches targeted at women and their partners as early as possible. (6) Support accessible, quality health and reproductive care services that can address these needs for all women.



Year	% LBW	Number	Washington State		
			% LBW	95% CI*	Number
1992-1994	0.95	118	0.84	(0.80,0.87)	1,969
1993-1995	0.88	115	0.83	(0.79,0.87)	1,934
1994-1996	0.84	115	0.90	(0.86,0.94)	2,079
1995-1997	0.81	115	0.95	(0.91,0.99)	2,210
1996-1998	0.90	133	1.03	(0.99,1.07)	2,417
1997-1999	0.85	129	1.03	(0.99,1.07)	2,423
1998-2000	0.91	143	1.02	(0.98,1.06)	2,434
1999-2001	0.87	137	1.01	(0.97,1.05)	2,399

*If the confidence intervals for state and county overlap in a given year, there is no significant difference between these rates.

See back side for technical notes and sources.



Technical Notes: Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW) infants weigh less than 1500 grams (approximately 3 pounds, 4 ounces) at birth.

Washington State has set more stringent health goals based on the higher health status of the general population of this region of the United States. Neither Clark County nor the state meet the Washington State Year 2000 Public Health Improvement Plan (PHIP) goal that no more than 0.7% of all births are VLBW.

Sources: (1) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1997). *Trends in the Well-Being of America's Children and Youth*. Retrieved January 21, 2003 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hps/97trends/hc2-2b.htm>. (2) Rand Health Research Highlights (1998). *Preventing Very Low Birthweight Births: A Bundle of Savings*. Retrieved January 21, 2003 from <http://www.rand.org/publications/RB/RB4514/>. (3) *Vital Registration System, Annual Statistics Files, Births 1980-2001*. [Data file]. Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. (4) Public Health: Seattle & King County, Epidemiology, Planning, & Evaluation. (1991-2003). *VistaPHw 2.3.2*, 2002 [Computer software for public health assessment]. Seattle, WA. (5) National Target, *Healthy People 2010* Objective 16-10b: no more than 0.9% of births are Very Low Birth Weight (VLBW). (6) March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation (2003). *Taking action against prematurity*. Retrieved February 10, 2003 from http://obgyn.pdr.net/be_core/g/index.jsp.